

## **Rock Springs Resource Management Plan**

### **Submitted by Wyoming Stock Growers Association**

- Preparation Time 12 Years
- Cost to Date \$8.9 million
- BLM Surface 3.6 million acres
- Draft RMP Released on August 17 with a 90-day public comment period.

### **Preferred Alternative (Alternative B)**

#### **Potential Impacts on Livestock Grazing as Compared to the Status Quo**

##### **Economic Impacts**

“A number of livestock grazing management actions under Alternative B could reduce the number of AUMs available for grazing, increase expenses, or alter management practices of operators. “ [Page 4-260]

“To the extent that some ranchers cannot adjust their operations to make up for the losses of the forage on BLM administered land, the nonmarket values associated with some of the ranches in the planning area, including provision of nonmarket lifestyle values to ranchers and open space amenity values to other residents and tourists, could be negatively impacted” [Page 4-261]

##### **Social Impacts**

“Livestock Grazing Stakeholders would find this alternative less favorable than Alternative A. Certain provisions of Alternative B could reduce the number of AUMs authorized for livestock grazing and be perceived as increasing their operating costs and requiring them to alter their management practices. These stakeholders would see this alternative as harmful to their abilities to maintain their livelihoods and the customs and culture of ranching, and they also would be concerned that this alternative would impact the long-term viability of maintaining livestock grazing as an important part of the traditions and economies of local communities.” [Page 4-262]

##### **Specific Grazing Impacts**

- Removes 7,606 AUMs of grazing
- Increases Areas of Critical Environmental Concern( ACEC) by 1,319,190 acres
- Retains 227,960 acres of Wilderness Study Area (WSA)
- Adds 63,918 acres “to protect wilderness characteristics”
- ORV limited to Designated Roads & Trails

- Removes “• Exclosures would be designed to allow ample water for livestock and allow minimum impediments to big game migration.”
- Grazing rest of fire areas increased from minimum of 2 years to minimum of 5 years.
- Limit control of noxious weeds and other invasive plant species to mechanical and biological methods.
- Designate, in coordination with APHIS-WS, the entire planning area as a “restricted control area” for animal control. Animal damage management may be planned, but control activities may be limited to certain methods or times of the year to achieve management objectives. Emphasize non-lethal methods.
- Manage all riparian areas for late successional stage vegetation or potential natural community. All riparian areas should, within five years, have activity or other management plans in various states of implementation that would allow riparian areas to achieve these objectives.
- Allow animal damage control on BLM land only if it would benefit Special Status Species or is needed for valid safety concerns.
- Prohibit livestock grazing in big game parturition habitat during the birthing season (usually from May 1 through June 30).
- Prohibit range improvement projects such as troughs, reservoirs, fences, and other surface-disturbing activities within 1,320 feet (¼ mile) of Special Status plant species populations, unless they are determined to be beneficial to that species.
- If a land health evaluation shows that land health standards are not met and current livestock grazing management is determined to be among the causal factors, implement a 20% reduction annually from the 10-year average of actual billed AUMs for each permit/lease up to three consecutive years (60%) in active AUMs until land health standards are met. Adjust reductions if it has been determined that significant progress has been made toward achieving land health standards.
- Establish allotment stocking rates which result in forage utilization levels in areas preferred by livestock (generally a light 21% to 40% utilization level) that provide for wildlife cover and utilization.
- Close all exclosures within the planning area to livestock grazing. Suspend AUMs currently authorized in these exclosures.
- Prohibit placement of salt and mineral supplements (such as low moisture block supplements) as follows:
  - Within ½ mile of natural perennial or ephemeral water sources, BLM water improvements, riparian-wetland areas, regional historic trails and early highways, or as needed to protect setting on areas being reclaimed
  - Within three miles on each side of the National Historic Trails (NHT) unless the project and its associated impacts are not visible from the NHTs
  - Within 2,640 feet (½ mile) of surface water sources (excluding stock tanks), riparian areas, and wetlands
  - Supplements within 1,320 feet (¼ mile) of Special Status plant species populations.

- Reduce areas open to grazing and available AUMs where industrial activity conflicts with grazing operations and rangeland management objectives. Conflicts could include loss of forage, unsuccessful rehabilitation of disturbed areas, invasive species, safety hazards, improper livestock distribution, or other circumstances.
- Prohibit livestock grazing in riparian areas that are not meeting PFC.
- (Cedar Canyon ACEC) Consider livestock water developments only if wildlife habitat and resource conditions would be improved or maintained.
- Prohibit livestock grazing in the portion of the Mellor Mountain grazing allotment that intersects the Sage Creek portion.
- Prohibit livestock grazing in the Jane's Meadow and Upper Currant Creek Pastures within the Sugarloaf Grazing Allotment.
- Prohibit livestock grazing in the Red Creek allotment.

## **CONSULTATION**

- Scoping-2011
- Cooperating Agency Review—14 Meetings 2011-2020. No meeting since July 2020. At the 2017 meeting BLM indicated that Alternative D would be the Preferred Alternative. This was subsequently changed since 2020 without any further communication with the Cooperating Agencies.